



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Eastern District of Wisconsin*

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Media Release:

**FORMER FOREST SERVICE EMPLOYEE PLEADS GUILTY TO STEALING \$300,000
FROM AGENCY**

Steven M. Biskupic, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, announced that late yesterday, Suzanne Poetz, 56, of Milwaukee, pleaded guilty to one count of theft of government property.

Ms. Poetz was employed by the United States Forest Service in Milwaukee for many years, becoming a regional grants and agreements coordinator for the agency in the late 1990's. Ms. Poetz admitted to stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars using a purchase card program that she helped to develop. Ironically, in 1998, Ms. Poetz received an award from Vice President Gore for her role in developing the purchase card program, which was cited for making government more efficient.

The case stems from an investigation by the United States Department of Agriculture, Office of the Inspector General. The prosecution of the case was handled by Assistant United States Attorney Jonathon H. Koenig.

As part of her plea, Ms. Poetz acknowledged that her crime involved more than 150 instances of theft, totaling more than \$300,000. Under the terms of the plea, Ms. Poetz will be required to pay back that money as restitution. The charge carries a maximum penalty of ten years imprisonment and a maximum fine of \$250,000. Sentencing will be held on September 3, 2008.

According to United States Attorney Steven M. Biskupic, "it is vital that the business of the government be conducted with absolute integrity and be above reproach. Government employees who steal have breached the trust reposed in them by the public and will be vigorously prosecuted by the Department of Justice".

It should be noted that after Ms. Poetz resigned from her position with the United States Forest Service policies and procedures were changed to ensure that future incidents of this nature would not occur.

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